

Claims:

1. A method of preparing a processed food for heating or cooking in a microwave oven, the method comprising including in the food an effective amount of a bean powder selected from the group consisting of lima bean powder and deodorised bean powders.
2. A method as claimed in claim 1 in which the processed food comprises a coating or batter and the bean powder is included in that coating or batter.
3. A method as claimed in claim 1 or claim 2 in which the processed food comprises pastry and the bean powder is included in that pastry.
4. A method as claimed in any of the preceding claims in which the method of preparing the food involves preparing a dough and the bean powder is included in that dough.
5. A method as claimed in any preceding claim in which the bean powder is dusted onto the exterior surface of the food.
6. A method as claimed in any preceding claim in which the food is prepared and is then chilled or frozen.
7. A method according to claim 6 in which the food is prepared and then baked or fried prior to being chilled or frozen.
8. A method as claimed in any preceding claim in which the food is a processed food selected from the group consisting of puff pastry products, pasta, pies, rolls and slices with both sweet and savoury fillings or toppings, bread, including crusty bread products, baguettes, loaves and rolls, garlic bread, soft bread products, fruited buns, hot dog rolls, burger buns, baps and naan bread, pitta bread, tortilla wraps and pizzas, pizza bases, topped pizzas, batters for Yorkshire pudding, choux buns, nuggets,

fritters, crumpets, cakes, sponge cakes, puddings, potato products, roast potatoes, French fries, potato wedges waffles, potato croquettes and shaped potato products, baked or fried filo pastries, spring rolls, samosas, parcels, morning goods including croissants, Danish pastries, doughnuts, shortcrust pastries, including pies and crumbles (with both sweet and savoury fillings), bread crumb for coating, and crumb coated meat, fish or poultry pieces or products, including shaped meat, fish or poultry products such as fingers or nuggets.

9. A method as claimed in any preceding claim in which the bean powder is included in a proportion of from 0.15 to 10% by weight based on the total weight of the food.

10. A method as claimed in any preceding claim in which a water absorbent vegetable fibre is included with the bean powder.

11. A method as claimed in claim 10 in which the water absorbent vegetable is included at from 1 to 50% by weight based on the weight of the bean powder.

12. A method as claimed in claim 10 or 11 in which the water absorbent vegetable fibre is potato fibre.

13. A method as claimed in any preceding claim in which one or more inorganic calcium compounds are included with the bean powder.

14. A method as claimed in claim 13 in which the one or more inorganic calcium compounds is included at from 1 to 50% by weight based on the weight of the bean powder.

15. A method as claimed in claim 13 or claim 14 in which the inorganic calcium compound is calcium carbonate.

16. A method as claimed in any preceding claim in which a modified cellulose is included with the bean powder.

17. A method as claimed in claim 16 in which the modified cellulose is included at between 1 and 50% by weight based on the weight of the bean powder.

18. A method as claimed in any preceding claim in which the bean powder is lima bean powder.

19. A method as claimed in any preceding claim in which a food additive composition comprising:

- i) bean powder;
- ii) water absorbent vegetable fibre;
- iii) one or more inorganic calcium compounds; and
- iv) modified cellulose,

wherein i) is present in a proportion of between 50 to 90% by weight based on the total weight of i), ii), iii) and iv),

is not included in the food.

20. A method as claimed in any preceding claim in which a food additive composition comprising 80-90% bean powder, 5-7% fine potato fibre, 3-5% calcium carbonate and 1-4% modified cellulose as active ingredients, is not included in the food.

21. A method of preparing a processed food for consumption comprising taking a processed food prepared according to the method of any preceding claim and heating it in a microwave oven.

22. A food additive composition comprising a bean powder selected from the group consisting of lima bean powder and deodorised bean powders, and at least one further component selected from the group consisting of a water absorbent vegetable fibre, an inorganic calcium compound and modified cellulose.

23. A food additive composition according to claim 22 which comprises water absorbent vegetable fibre.

24. A food additive composition as claimed in claim 23 in which the water absorbent vegetable fibre is present in an amount of 1 to 50% by weight based on the weight of the bean powder.

25. A food additive composition as claimed in claim 23 or claim 24 in which the water absorbent vegetable fibre is potato fibre.

26. A food additive composition as claimed in any of claims 22 to 25 which comprises an inorganic calcium compound.

27. A food additive as claimed in claim 26 in which the inorganic calcium compound is present in an amount of 1 to 50% by weight based on the weight of the bean powder.

28. A food additive composition as claimed in claim 26 or claim 27 in which the inorganic calcium compound is calcium carbonate.

29. A food additive composition as claimed in any of claims 22 to 28 which comprises modified cellulose.

30. A food additive composition as claimed in claim 29 in which the modified cellulose is present at from 1 to 50% by weight based on the weight of the bean powder.

31. A food additive composition as claimed in any of claims 22 to 30 in which the bean powder is lima bean powder.

32. A food additive composition as claimed in any of claims 22 to 31 which is not a composition comprising

- i) bean powder;
- ii) water absorbent vegetable fibre;
- iii) one or more inorganic calcium compounds; and
- iv) Modified cellulose,

wherein i) is present in a proportion of between 50 to 90% by weight based on the total weight of i), ii), iii) and iv).

33. A food additive composition as claimed in any of claims 21 to 30 which does not comprise 80-90% bean powder, 5-7% fine potato fibre, 3-5% calcium carbonate and 1-4% modified cellulose as active ingredients.

34. A processed food made by a method according to any of claims 1 to 21 or comprising a food additive composition according to any of claims 22 to 33.

35. A processed food as claimed in claim 34 packaged in a microwave heatable packaging material.

36. A processed food as claimed in claim 35 in which the packaging utilises susceptor technology.

37. A processed food as claimed in any of claims 34 to 36 which comprises the bean powder or the food additive composition as a dusting or coating.

38. A base dough formulation comprising a food additive composition according to any of claims 22 to 33 in an amount of 0.5 to 5.0% based on the total weight of the dough.

39. A base batter formulation comprising the food additive composition according to any of claims 22 to 33 in an amount of from 0.75 to 8.5% based on the total weight of the dough.

40. A base potato dough formulation comprising a food additive composition according to any of claims 22 to 33 in amount of from 0.5% to 3.0% by weight based on the total weight of the dough.

41. A filling or topping for a dough product comprising the food additive composition according to any of claims 22 to 33 in an amount of from 1.0% to 5.0% by weight based on the total weight of the filling or topping.

42. A premix for making a microwave heatable processed food comprising a food additive composition

according to any of claims 22 to 33 in combination with a base ingredient of a processed food.

43. Use of lima bean powder or a food additive composition according to any of claims 22 to 33 in a processed food for microwave heating or cooking to improve the texture of the food obtained upon microwave heating or cooking.